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ABSTRACT

A 3-year community service learning program was established at a small high school in Maine. The program aims to provide a unifying focus for a fragmented student population, address community problems, and increase students' self-esteem and feelings of being meaningful members of their community. In grade 9, teachers of every subject design exploratory community learning experiences for all students. During grade 10, integrated teams of heterogeneously grouped students meet monthly with teams of teachers to participate in nine seminars. These seminars include field trips to potential service learning sites and community meetings and culminate in the development of individual service learning action plans. In grade 11, students implement their action plans, performing a minimum of 50 hours of hands-on work, and prepare a portfolio demonstrating the outcomes of their learning. A survey was administered to 64 students at the end of the 3-year program and to 70 seniors who had not participated in the program. The two groups differed significantly in reported school belonging and willingness to participate in one's community and help others. Both groups reported relatively high self-esteem, regardless of program participation. Seventy-five percent of the treatment group agreed that they could make a difference in the world, and this attitude was correlated with self-esteem. Self-esteem was also correlated with school belonging. An appendix contains the student survey. (SV)

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Community Service Learning: Goals and Outcomes

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Community Service Learning: Goals and Outcomes

Service learning programs have mushroomed over the last decade, as have the promised benefits of such programs. "Service learning involves students in real-life settings where they apply academic knowledge and previous experiences to meet real community needs" (Fertman, 1994, p.8). Promised or hoped for benefits to service learning participants include increased civic participation, academic learning, volunteerism and responsibility as well as more relevant community focused learning experiences, and increased student self-esteem, belonging and moral reasoning skills. (Brandell and Hinck, 1997, Alt 1997; Kinsley, 1997; Theobald and Nachtigal, 1995). Research continues to identify components of "successful" service learning programs (Fertman, 1994, Shumer, 1997, Alt, 1997, Howe, 1997), yet documented results of service learning programs are still scarce.

The program described in this paper incorporated components recognized as successful including infusion into the academic curriculum, service over several years, connection to and involvement of community people and resources and reflection regularly built into the program.

Program Rationale and Development

Students at Asa High School are sharply divided across cultural and academic lines. With a total population of 320 students, only 65% of the Asa High School students are Asa residents, while 24% reside in Glenville, 8% in Vern, 2% in Milltown, and 1% in other towns. Although the school is located in a university community and has a reputation for sending a large percentage of graduates to colleges and universities, only 54% of the 1992 graduates actually went on to 4-year colleges and universities. Forty-three percent of the students enroll in other than the college preparatory program. A few of these students attend the local vocational school, but most participate in a general program with little opportunity for specific direction or career exploration. They demonstrate feelings of alienation from the academic and social opportunities offered at the school and score significantly below the state average in all areas of the Maine Assessment Test.

Although faculty, administration, parents, and students are deeply concerned about the fragmentation among the students and the large

numbers who are underserved by and disaffected from the present program, there is concern, as well, about the evidence of extreme self-focus and the striking lack of social responsibility in many students, irrespective of their academic achievement or feeling of connection to the school.

In the communities represented by Asa High School there are significant community problems that may be addressed through service learning. Among these are assistance to, and care for, the elderly, children, the disabled, and the homeless. Additional needs include conservation, recycling, beautification, recreation, safety and rescue, and literacy.

One purpose of the community service learning program is to provide a unifying focus for a fragmented student population. Although the actual dropout rate for Asa High School is very low, there are many students who do not feel connected to the school and have in essence "dropped out" although they still attend. Another purpose is for students to view themselves as meaningful members of the communities of which they are a part, and to become more confident (self-esteem) as they develop skills and a personal value system important to responsible participation in a democratic society.

In the ninth grade, teachers of every subject area design exploratory community learning experiences for all students. Student experiences include producing a *Foxfire* -like book of oral history, examining the causes of homelessness, surveying the need for increased recycling efforts, or providing assistant coaches for youth sports through the town recreation department.

The outcomes for the first year will enable students to observe and understand specific connections between school learning and community situations and problems. Teachers assist students in examining their reactions, in identifying fundamental causes of community needs and in working together to analyze the kinds of skills and knowledge needed to effect remedies. Students reflect formally on their learning by preparing a project summary.

During the second year, integrated teams of heterogeneously grouped tenth grade students meet monthly with teams of tenth grade teachers to participate in a series of nine seminars. Designed with democratic input of tenth grade students and teachers, these seminars include field trips to potential community service learning sites such as a nursing home, recycling center, and town rescue service. Additionally, students attend

meetings of the town council and school committee and participate in discussions with other community representatives, many of whom are parents or relatives of students at Asa High School. These activities augment ninth grade community exploratory experiences and build upon student's increased awareness and knowledge, culminating in the development of a personal Community Service Learning Action Plan. In the plan students outline their specific choice for "hands on" service learning to be implemented during their eleventh grade year at a site compatible with their maturity, interests, and skills. Students elect to design and implement their plan either individually or in small groups.

An important component of this phase is the initiation of the student relationships with community mentors, who will serve as guides and resources for students when they implement their action plans in Grade 11. Mentors are selected from a pool of volunteers representing the communities' rich resources of interested retirees, parents, and workers who have agreed to carry a small caseload of students. A bank of community resources has been developed to aid students in planning and implementing their projects.

In Grade 11 students participate in actual service to others in the community through the implementation of their Community Service Learning Plans. For a minimum of 50 hours, beginning in September and ending the following January, they perform the "hands on" contributive work outlined and described in their plans. Although students are encouraged to work 2-3 hours per week after school and on weekends, some students need extended blocks of time during school vacations. Students have the opportunity to meet at least monthly with their assigned mentors and site supervisors for assistance, direction and reflective listening as they progress through their service learning.

In the second semester of the 11th grade, upon completion of their service learning commitment, student prepare a portfolio demonstrating the outcomes of their learning. The portfolio is first reviewed by the 11th grade teacher team and then formally presented by the student to the Community Service Learning Council. This is specifically designed for students to have the attention and input of a group of interested adults, an opportunity not often available to them.

Methodology

A survey was developed consisting of a school belonging scale (Goodenow, 1993), self-esteem scale (Coopersmith, 1967) and questions

asking about willingness to help others and volunteer within a community as well as belief that they can make a difference (see Appendix).

The survey was administered to all third year student two weeks after the completion of their three year community service learning program (treatment group, N=64). The same survey was previously (fall. 1997) administered to seniors, all of whom had not been required or permitted to be involved in the program (control group, N=70).

Tests of significance (ANOVA) were run between the two groups for the school belonging and self-esteem scales as well as for willingness to help others and be an active citizen within in the community. Correlations within the treatment group were run between both self-esteem and belonging scales and willingness to participate and help others and belief that they can make a difference in the world.

Results

The students who completed the three-year community service learning program reported a significantly higher sense of school belonging at the .0001 level than the control group. The scores were 3.68 and 3.23 respectively with 3.0 being neutral. In order to obtain the scores the negatively stated items were reversed so that the higher the score the greater the reported sense of belonging. (See survey items 46-63 in the appendix). The perception of self-esteem showed no significant differences between the two groups. Both groups reported relatively high self-esteem. (See Table 1)

Table 1
Self-Esteem Means of Treatment and Control Groups on Selected Items

Item	Treatment Mean (1=like me, 2=not like me)	Control Mean
I often wish I were someone else	1.73	1.75
I am easy to like	1.13	1.11
Someone always has to tell me what to do	1.89	1.90
I often feel ashamed of myself	1.97	1.87
Kids pick on me very often	1.95	1.89
My teachers make me feel I am not good enough	1.90	1.94

The mean scores for the treatment group reported more importance or agreement on all willingness to contribute, help others and make a

difference items than the control group (tables two and three). However, only three of the items showed significant differences between the two groups. The community service learning group attributed more importance to "giving 3% or more of my income to help those in need" ($p<.001$). They also agreed more strongly ($p<.05$) with "people ought to help those in need as a payback for their own opportunities, fortunes and successes" and "adults should give some time for the good of their community or country."

Table 2
Willingness to Contribute and Help Others

Item	Treatment Group Means	Control Group Means
Volunteering my time helping people in need	2.62	2.46
Funding a career that provides the opportunity to be helpful to others or useful to society	2.67	2.61
Becoming involved in a program to improve my community	2.49	2.49
Giving 3% or more of my income to help those in need	2.41*	1.93

Notes:
*= Significant at the .001 level
Scale = 1 - not important, 2 - slightly important, 3 - very important, 4 - absolutely essential

Table 3
Willingness to Contribute, Help Others and Make a Difference

Item	Treatment Group Means	Control Group Means
People ought to help those in need as a "payback" for there own opportunities, fortunes, and successes.	2.92**	3.31
Adults should give some time for the good of their community or country	2.16**	2.53
People regardless of whether they have been successful or not, ought to help those in need	2.31	2.53
Most individuals can in some way make the world better	1.91	1.97
I feel I can make a difference in the world	2.08	2.36

Notes:
**= Significant at the .05 level
Scale: 1=strongly agree – 5=strongly disagree

Looking only at the community service learning (treatment) group, their correlation between reported school belonging and self-esteem scores was .446, significant at the .001 level.

There was no significant correlation between self-esteem and the item. "I believe I can make a difference in the world." There were significant negative correlations at the .05 level between " I believe I can make a difference in the world" and the following self-esteem items: "I would change lots of things about myself is I could;" and "Things are all mixed up in my life." The correlations were -.26,-.27 respectively. The correlation between reported school belonging and the "I believe I can make a difference..." item was -.27, significant at the .05 level. Those reporting higher school belonging more strongly agreed with the items. In addition there were significant correlations at the .001 level between school belonging and positively valuing or agreeing with four of the willingness to contribute, help others and make a difference items. The items were "becoming involved in a program to improve my community "and" volunteering my time helping people in need" (on a scale of 1=not important to 4=absolutely essential), and "most individuals can in some way make the world better" and "people ought to keep those in need even if they are unsuccessful (on a scale of 1=strogly agree to 5=strogly disagree). The correlations were .51, .45, -.40, and -.42 respectively.

Discussion

There were significant differences in reported school belonging, and willingness to participate in one's community and help others between the community service learning group and the control group, with the service learning group reporting higher school belonging and "willingness" scores. As positive as the results are for service learning, the differences cannot be directly attributed to the service learning program. So many variables over three years of high school could influence such differences. Even given that, the results for the community service learning group are indeed heartening. One of the purposes of the program was to provide a unifying focus for students. The positive school belonging scores are evidence that the treatment group identified with the school and felt respected by their peers and teachers.

Another purpose of the program was for students to become more self-confident. Both groups reported relatively high self-esteem(table one), regardless of program participation.

A third purpose of the program was for students to view themselves as meaningful members of he communities of which they are a part and see as important responsible participation within community. Even though one can not attribute the results to the community service learning program the mean scores on "willingness to participate and help others" items for the treatment group not only show significant differences from the control group, but show a true willingness to contribute (tables two and three). Also the treatment group mean on the item "I feel I can make a difference in the world" was 2.08 (strongly agree = 1, strongly disagree = 5). Seventy-five percent of the treatment group either strongly agreed or agreed with this item. That indicates that the large majority of students do view themselves as able to make a difference and therefore be meaningful members of the community and world.

The correlations are of interest. The significant correlation between reported school belonging and reported self-esteem can serve to alert school personnel to a possible connection between the two constructs. The question may be which one, if either, is a precursor to the other. Does one's self-esteem dictate one's perceived school belonging or vice versa or do they regularly build one on the other? Obviously this study cannot answer that question; however, the significant correlation between the two begs for more study.

The significant correlation between "I believe I can make a difference in the world" and two self esteem items show a possible truth. If you have a low concept of self you are not likely to think you have the ability to make a difference in the world. Although the correlations were significantly at the .05 level they certainly are not impressively high (-.26, -.27) leaving the author to wonder about other contributing variables.

The treatment group's significant correlations between reported school belonging scores and four "willingness to become involved in the community and help others" items ranging from .40 to .51, demonstrate a strong relationship between belonging and willingness to become involved. There are many possible explanations for this relationship, all beyond the scope of this study. The community service learning program involved participating in community service. Perhaps that alone contributed to the willingness to participate reported by the group. The sense of school belonging may be incidental to their willingness.

Conclusion

The results of this study are heartening for high school community service learning programs; however, they are also very inconclusive. Differences between the treatment and control groups demonstrate for the community service leaning group, a greater reported school belonging and more willingness to contribute to the community. The treatment group also scored higher, although not significantly so, on the "I can make a difference in the world" item. These results align with the purposes of the community service learning program, yet the findings can not be credited to the program alone. In a school setting there are so many intervening variables that it is impossible at this point to credit the program. Further study can help answer the questions raised by this study.

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Appendix

Class Survey

Please complete the survey as accurately as possible. The survey results will be studied as group data only. We do not want your name on the survey. No individuals will be able to be identified. We appreciate your time.

Sex	Typical grades earned this year	Where do you live?
☐ Female ☐ Male	☐ Mostly A's ☐ Mostly B's ☐ Mostly C's ☐ Mostly D's or E's	☐ Orono ☐ Veazie ☐ Glenburn ☐ Other

Please indicate the importance of the following to you personally by circling the appropriate number.		Not Important	Slightly Important	Very Important	Absolutely Essential
1.	**Working toward equal opportunity for all U.S. citizens.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
2.	Becoming involved in a program to improve my community.	1	2	3	4
3.	**Being very well off financially.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
4.	Volunteering my time helping people in need.	1	2	3	4
5.	**Giving 3% or more of my income to help those in need.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
6.	Finding a career that provides the opportunity to be helpful to others or useful to society.	1	2	3	4

Please indicate the extent that you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7.	**Adults should give some time for the good of their community or country.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8.	Most individuals can in some way make the world better.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	**Most misfortunes that occur to people are frequently the result of circumstances beyond their control.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10.	If I could change one thing about society, it would be to achieve greater equality among all people.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	**People, regardless of whether they have been successful or not, ought to help those in need.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
12.	People ought to help those in need as a "payback" for their own opportunities, fortunes, and successes.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	**I feel that I can make a difference in the world.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate number.		Like Me	Not Like Me
14.	**I often wish I were someone else.**	**1**	**2**
15.	I am easy to like.	1	2
16.	**There are lots of things about myself that I would change if I could.**	**1**	**2**

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Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate number.

		Like Me	Not Like Me
17.	I can make up my mind without too much trouble.	1	2
18.	I am a lot of fun to be with.	1	2
19.	I am proud of my school work.	1	2
20.	Someone always has to tell me what to do.	1	2
21.	I am often sorry for the things I do.	1	2
22.	I am doing the best work that I can.	1	2
23.	I am pretty happy.	1	2
24.	I like to be called on in class.	1	2
25.	It is pretty tough to be me.	1	2
26.	Things are all mixed up in my life.	1	2
27.	I am not doing as well in school as I would like to.	1	2
28.	I have a low opinion of myself.	1	2
29.	I don't like to be with other people.	1	2
30.	I often feel ashamed of myself.	1	2
31.	Kids pick on me very often.	1	2
32.	My teacher makes me feel I'm not good enough.	1	2
33.	Most people are better liked than I am.	1	2
34.	I often get discouraged in school.	1	2
35.	I can't be depended on.	1	2

Please answer the following questions by circling the appropriate letter.

36. What kind of work do you think you will be doing when you are 30 years old?

    a. Laborer, fast food server, semi-skilled worker, sales clerk, office clerical worker
    b. Protective services (police, enlisted military service)
    c. Military officer, craftsman or skilled worker, sales
    d. Manager, administrator, professional artist, school teacher, etc.
    e. Lawyer, M.D., architect, etc.
    f. Farm work/outside work

37. How certain are you that you will like this kind of work?

    a. Absolutely certain
    b. Somewhat certain
    c. Uncertain
    d. Very certain

38. How long have you thought that this is the type of career that you would enjoy?

    a. For the last few weeks
    b. For the last few months
    c. For approximately the last year
    d. For more than 2 years

39. How likely do you think it is that you will do this kind of work?

    a. Absolutely likely
    b. Very likely
    c. Somewhat likely
    d. Not very likely

40. How certain are you that this kind of work is a good choice for you?

    a. Absolutely certain
    b. Somewhat certain
    c. Uncertain
    d. Very certain

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Please answer the following question by circling the appropriate letter.

41. How satisfying do you think this kind of work will be for you?

a. Extremely satisfying
b. Satisfying
c. Somewhat satisfying
d. Not satisfying

Please circle the appropriate number for the following.	They're Great	They're Okay	Don't Care	They're a Pain	They're Disliked
42. **How do you and your friends in this school generally feel about students who get very good grades?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
43. How do you and your friends in this school generally feel about students who are very good athletes?	1	2	3	4	5
44. **How do you and your friends in this school generally feel about students who are good musicians, artists, actors, or actresses?**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
45. How do you and your friends in this school generally feel about students who work at jobs after school?	1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the number that best indicates how true each statement is for you.	Not at all true				Completely true
46. **I feel like a real part of my school.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
47. People here notice when I'm good at something.	1	2	3	4	5
48. **It is hard for people like me to be accepted here.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
49. Other students in this school take my opinions seriously.	1	2	3	4	5
50. **Most teachers at my school are interested in me.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
51. Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here.	1	2	3	4	5
52. **There's at least one teacher or other adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
53. People at this school are friendly to me.	1	2	3	4	5
54. **Teachers here are not interested in people like me.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
55. I am included in lots of activities at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
56. **I am treated with as much respect as other students.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
57. I feel very different than most other students here.	1	2	3	4	5
58. **I can really be myself at this school.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
59. The teachers here respect me.	1	2	3	4	5
60. **People here know I can do good work.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
61. I wish I were in a different school.	1	2	3	4	5
62. **I feel proud of belonging to this school.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
63. Other students here like me the way I am.	1	2	3	4	5

Please circle the appropriate number for the following.	I probably won't do this.	Don't Know	I probably will do this.	I have already done this.
64. **Vote in a public election.**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
65. Write to public officials.	1	2	3	4

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Please circle the appropriate number for the following.	I probably won't do this.	Don't Know	I probably will do this.	I have already done this.
66. Give money to a political candidate or cause.	1	2	3	4
67. Work in a political campaign.	1	2	3	4
68. Boycott certain products or stores.	1	2	3	4

Please indicate the extent that you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
69. In general, I enjoy working on class projects with other students.	1	2	3	4	5
70. In general, I prefer to work on class projects with students from my own social group.	1	2	3	4	5
71. In general, I welcome the opportunity to work on class projects with students from other social groups.	1	2	3	4	5
72. It is important to do my best in any work even if no one else sees it.	1	2	3	4	5
73. Some teachers have given me a better grade than I have worked for.	1	2	3	4	5
74. It feels good to help others.	1	2	3	4	5
75. What I have learned in math I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
76. What I have learned in English (reading and language arts) I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
77. What I have learned in social studies I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
78. What I have learned in physical education I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5

If you have taken any of the following courses, please answer the question(s). Leave those blank that do not apply.

79. What I have learned in music (chorus, band, or orchestra) I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
80. What I have learned in French or Spanish I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
81. What I have learned in art I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
82. What I have learned in technology education I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5
83. What I have learned in F.I.T.S. I can use outside of school as well as in school.	1	2	3	4	5

84. If there is one thing you could see done to benefit an individual, group, or your town, what would it be?

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Thank you for completing the survey.